

Inspection of a good school: Crowton Christ Church CofE Primary School

Crowton, Northwich, Cheshire CW8 2RW

Inspection date:

2 March 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including children in the early years, enjoy coming to this small and welcoming school. Right from the start, they are taught the importance of sharing and of being kind to one another. The positive relationships they have with each other, which they share with adults, help them to feel happy and safe in school.

Pupils know who to talk to if they have any worries or concerns. They are confident that staff will deal effectively with bullying should it occur.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), respond well to leaders' high expectations of their behaviour. They are polite, confident and well mannered. Pupils are considerate of each other, behave well and try hard in their lessons.

Leaders have made sure that pupils can experience a wide variety of trips and visits to support their learning. For example, older pupils visited a museum to act out a court case as part of their learning about crime and punishment.

Leaders and staff have made recent improvements to the curriculum. This is helping pupils to build more logically on what they know and can do already. However, in many subjects, these improvements are in the early stages. Added to this, subject leaders have not ensured that curriculums are being delivered as they intend by some staff. This prevents some pupils from achieving as well as they should.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

With the support of the local authority and the diocese, leaders have made appropriate changes to the curriculum. Leaders introduced a curriculum in September 2022 that is suitably broad and balanced. Staff are now clear about the knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn and in what order. For example, in mathematics, teachers know what to teach and when to teach it. This means that pupils' learning builds on what they already know, and they can make links between new content and their prior learning.

However, as many subject curriculums have been introduced recently, leaders have not checked how well these curriculums are being delivered in practice or provided appropriate support for staff. As a result, there are inconsistencies in how well some curriculums are delivered. This slows pupils' progress in these subjects.

In some subjects, teachers check what pupils know and remember over time. This helps pupils, including pupils with SEND, to keep up with the intended curriculum. However, in a small number of subjects, teachers do not use assessment strategies well to check on pupils' learning. Consequently, in some subjects, teachers do not match learning carefully enough to what pupils already know and can do. Some pupils learn new concepts before they have the foundational knowledge on which they can build.

A love of reading is fostered throughout the school. Older pupils become avid readers. They talk enthusiastically about the books they have read. Pupils appreciate the wide selection of books available to them. Leaders have successfully introduced a new phonics curriculum. They have provided training for staff to deliver this curriculum well. The phonics curriculum is taught from the beginning of the Reception Year. Leaders ensure that the books pupils read match the sounds they are learning in class. Those children and pupils who need help to catch up are supported effectively. This means that pupils become confident and fluent readers.

Staff have recently received training, which is helping them to identify the needs of pupils with SEND accurately, including those in the early years. Staff ensure that the curriculum is carefully adapted so that pupils with SEND access the full curriculum. Pupils with SEND participate fully in all aspects of school life.

Leaders have made sure that pupils have many opportunities to further enhance their wider development. They learn about diversity and understand that respect for other people is important. Pupils also have many opportunities to learn how to be responsible members of the school and wider community. For example, junior safety officers won an award for the information they produced for pupils on how to stay safe on Bonfire Night. Pupils learn to be confident and to contribute positively to society.

Leaders have created a calm environment in which pupils can learn. Pupils are polite, listen well in lessons and focus on their learning. Relationships between staff and pupils are supportive. As a result, there is little disruption to learning.

Parents and carers appreciate the nurturing 'family feel' of the school. Strong relationships between staff and parents begin to form as soon as children join the Reception Year. Staff enjoy working at the school and feel well supported by leaders.

The local authority and the diocese have provided appropriate support to stabilise the leadership and governance of the school. Governors are committed to the school. However, until recently, they have not held leaders to account as effectively as they should for the quality of education that pupils receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. Staff are trained well to recognise if a pupil may be at risk of harm or might need help. There are clear reporting systems in place. Leaders and staff know their community and families well. They work effectively with external agencies to ensure that pupils and their families get the support they need to stay safe.

Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe, especially when they are online. They feel that they can share their worries with adults. They trust staff at the school to keep them safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In most subjects, curriculums have only been introduced recently. As a result, subject leaders have not had sufficient opportunities to check that teachers deliver these curriculums effectively or provide appropriate support for staff. This leads to some inconsistencies in how well the curriculums are being delivered and slows pupils' progress. Leaders should ensure that subject leaders receive suitable support so that they are equipped well to support teachers to deliver these subject curriculums with confidence.
- In a few subjects, teachers do not use assessment strategies consistently well to check on what pupils already know and understand. This means some pupils struggle to retain and apply what they have been taught. Leaders should ensure that teachers use assessment strategies effectively so that pupils can build securely on prior learning.
- Over time, governors have not been informed well enough about the school and the quality of education for pupils. As a result, their strategic oversight of some aspects of the school's work has not been sufficiently robust. Governors must ensure that they have a clearer understanding of leaders' work so that they can fulfil their strategic responsibilities more effectively, including holding leaders to account.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually, this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2013.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	111336
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10256191
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	43
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chairs of the governing body	Ruth Downes and Sarah Thompson
Headteacher	Heather Bettley
Website	www.crowton.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 December 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The governing body is responsible for the before- and after-school provision.
- There is a new co-chair of governors since the last inspection.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Chester.
- The school's last section 48 inspection under the Education Act for schools of a religious character was carried out in February 2017.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders.
- The lead inspector met with a range of governors.

- The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the diocese and the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects with leaders.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation about safeguarding. Inspectors also spoke with staff to understand how they keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed by parents in their responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. This included the free-text comments. Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils. Inspectors also spoke with some pupils about school life.
- Inspectors spoke with staff to discuss leaders' support of their workload and well-being.

Inspection team

Julie Barlow, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Vanessa MacDonald

Ofsted Inspector

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